

Joseph Seraphin House  
74 Seraphin Street  
Ste. Genevieve  
Ste. Genevieve County  
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1282

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Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

Addendum to  
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
JOSEPH SERAPHIN HOUSE

Location: 74 Seraphin Street, Ste. Genevieve, Ste.  
Genevieve County, Missouri, 63670

Present Owner: Margaret Ann Koch

Present Occupant: owner

Present Use: residence

Significance: This small, two-room example is the only surviving one-and-a-half story creole house in Ste. Genevieve, a National Historic Landmark Historic District, that contained an upper half-story when it was first built. It is of poteaux sur sole construction, and the vertical logs of unusual height rise unbroken from the sills to the eaves and there are puncheon joists in the cellar.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: 1826-1856. From 1792, the property was owned by Joseph Seraphin and his heirs, and was acquired in 1826 by Antoine Recola, a free black man. In that and earlier deeds, the property is described as having "three of four cabins" erected on it. It seems unlikely that the present house would have been described in those terms, and would date from the period of Racola's ownership.
2. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description: All that part of Survey number 211: beginning at the northwest corner of number 211 and running north 76 degrees, 45 seconds east along the south line of Seraphin Street for a distance of 95 feet 6 inches to a point for the beginning corner of the lot hereby conveyed then north 76 degrees 45 seconds east 80 feet to a point for a corner being the northwest corner of a lot conveyed to Dallas Pratte and Nina, his wife on April 5, 1933 (106-161) then south 18 degrees east along the west line of the Pratte lot, 284 feet more or less to a point for a corner: then north on a direct line 284 feet more or less to the beginning.  
Chain of title:
  - a. August 5, 1785, mention of Joseph Seraphin as a bordering owner who occupied this plot of ground. Land records 2 (LR151).

- b. December 25, 1813, by general warranty deed from Francois Langelier and Pelagie, his wife to Burwell Calvert for \$150.00. In April of 1792 Joseph Seraphin married Elizabeth Billeron, the widow of Joseph Langelier. Francois Langelier was her son from her first marriage. Deed book B, page 316.
- c. October 2, 1813, by general warranty deed from Burwell Calvert and Nancy, his wife to Hugh M. Goza for \$200.00. Deed book B, page 429.
- d. September 17, 1818, by general warranty deed from Hugh M. Goza and Sarah, his wife to Bazil Mesplay (sp?) for \$200.00. Deed book C, page 147.
- e. March 30, 1826, by general warranty deed from Bazil Misplait and Julie, his wife to Antoine Recola for \$150.00. Deed book D, page 229.
- f. January 1856, by will of Antoine Recola, a free black man, dated March 30, 1826 to Angeline, his niece (daughter of Archange, his sister). Deed book K, page 145.
- g. November 4, 1873, by public sale/general warranty deed from Angelique, alias Angeline, a black woman, sold at auction to John L. Bogy for \$117.00. Deed book Z, page 58.
- h. November 28, 1873, by general warranty deed from John L. Bogy and Melanine, his wife to J. B. Guignon, and J. Huck for \$100.00, two-thirds of survey no. 211. Deed book Z, page 64.
- i. March 17, 1875, by general warranty deed from John L. Bogy and Melanie, his wife, Joseph Huck and Caroline, his wife, Jules P. Guignon, and Elizabeth, his wife to Jacob Kruse for \$150.00. Deed book 31, page 421.
- j. December 12, 1881, by public sale/general warranty deed from Jacob Kruse to Joseph A. Amoreaux for \$150.00. Deed book 34, page 71.
- k. February 15, 1929, by general warranty deed from heirs of Joseph A. Amoureux: Clara James, and William C. James, Ella Jones, and Lee Jones, J. Welton Staten, Emily E. Carey, and Robert S. Carey, her husband, R. Edward Staten to Benjamin Hauck and Bertha Hauck, his wife. Deed book 103, page 116.
- l. May 21, 1945, by general warranty deed from Benjamin W. Hauck to William and Vergie Lee Stange for \$3,000.00. Deed book 125, page 18.
- m. October 6, 1983, by general warranty deed from Vergie Lee Stange, widow of William R. Stange, to Margaret Ann Koch. Deed book 352, page 31.

3. Original plans and construction: One-and-a-half stories with elevated cellar.
4. Alterations and additions: Rear, shed addition and front porch.

B. Historical Context:

Ste. Genevieve is one of the most important French colonial settlements in the mid-Mississippi valley, and the one that best preserves the architecture of that period. The Seraphin house is a special example of creole construction being one and a half stories in height.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is an example of vertical log construction on a stone foundation, what the French called "poteaux sur sole." Its story-and-a-half form is unusual when compared to other more common one-story form of creole architecture in the area.
2. Condition of fabric: good. The house was renovated in 1983, including insulation and some new windows.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: One-and-a-half story on elevated cellar, unaccessible attic, 26'-3" across the front by 30'-1" deep.
2. Foundations: Limestone pier construction, early filled in.
3. Walls: Vertical, white oak logs, mortised into a sill, plastered or sheathed with horizontal clapboards. Vertical logs, smaller than typical, with the bark left on, simply hewn flat on the inner and outer surfaces to receive plaster walls and clapboarding.
4. Structural system, framing: Vertical log structure on a sill carrying a plate, hewn logs closely spaced, floor beams mortised into the sill. Vertical sawn, 2" x 4" rafters with collar beams.
5. Porches: modern porch.

6. Chimneys: one brick.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Principal entrances are at the center of both the front and the rear of the house. There are no secondary entrances. A separate entrance at the east of the house leads into the cellar.
  - b. Windows and shutters: Double hung, no shutters, six light sash.
8. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof with metal covering (over earlier wood shingles?).
  - b. Cornice, eaves: Projecting eaves, finished with soffit.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
  - a. First floor: Three room plan; two rooms side by side with shared interior wall carrying a chimney and one large room addition running the width of the house at the rear.
  - b. Cellar: Partial finished cellar space under front of the house.
  - c. Attic: two, finished rooms on the upper floor.
2. Stairways: Stairway in northwest corner of house.
3. Flooring: wood.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: plaster.
5. Mechanical equipment: modern heating, lighting and plumbing.

D. Site:

General setting and orientation:

The house faces north on an open, deep lot, on one of the early side streets off St. Mary's Road.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Interviews: December 11, 1983 with Margaret and Royce Wilhauk, parents of the present owner, when the house was under renovation.

B. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources: Deed records in the Ste. Genevieve County Clerk's Office, County Courthouse. Other records in the Ste. Genevieve Archives (SGA), collected on microfilm, Western Historical Manuscripts Collection, University of Missouri-Columbia.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Ekberg, Carl J., Colonial Ste. Genevieve, An Adventure on the Mississippi Frontier (Gerald, Missouri: The Patrice Press, 1985).

Franzwa, Gregory M., The Story of Old Ste. Genevieve (St. Louis: The Patrice Press, 1967).

Peterson, Charles E., "Early Ste. Genevieve and its Architecture," The Missouri Historical Review, XXXV:2 (January 1941), pp. 207-232.

Porterfield, Neil H. "Ste. Genevieve, Missouri," in John Francis McDermott, editor, Frenchmen and French Ways in the Mississippi Valley (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1969), pp. 141-177.

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration, Missouri, A Guide to the "Show Me" State (Missouri State Highway Department, 1941).

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) team of the Rocky Mountain Regional Office, National Park Service, under the direction of Historical Architect Thomas G. Keohan. Documentation was carried out during the summer of 1985 at the HABS field office in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, by project supervisor Osmund Overby (University of Missouri-Columbia), project architects James Q. Marsh (Hemet, California), William D. Cesaletti (Kaaau, Hawaii), and Terance A. Gruenhagen (North Dakota State University), and project historian Claudia A. Barbero (University of Missouri-Columbia).

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